

# Senior Perspectives

MARCH | APRIL 2018

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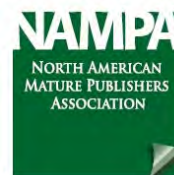
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# Letter from the Editor

## Setting records against Alzheimer's



BY  
MICHELLE  
FIELDS

The Senior Resources team for the Walk to End Alzheimer's Disease far exceeded this year's fundraising goal of \$2,000. With the leadership of Abbey Gannon and support of the Service Committee and staff, we were able to raise a total of \$3,011.73!

The 2017 Walk was held on Saturday, September 25th at Heritage Landing in Muskegon. More than 500 residents from the Muskegon area joined the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's in the fight to end Alzheimer's disease. Participants raised a record total of \$66,500 to fund Alzheimer's care, support and research programs.

"This year's event was incredible," says Kayla Myers, Walk manager for the Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Great Lakes Chapter. "We often say that the Walk is like the world's biggest support group. To see so many people in Muskegon coming together to support one another and raise funds and awareness for Alzheimer's is truly inspiring."

In Michigan alone, there are more than 180,000 people living with the disease and over half a million caregivers. In the United States, more than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, the sixth-leading cause of death in and the only disease among the top 10 causes that cannot be cured, prevented or even slowed. Additionally, more than 15 million family and friends provide care to people with Alzheimer's and other dementias.

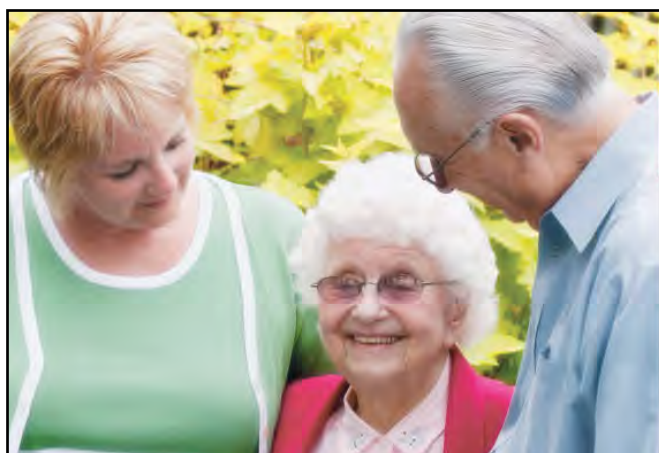
**For the 4th year, Senior Perspectives is proud to be a Media Partner with the Alzheimer's Association. To make a donation, visit [alz.org/walk](http://alz.org/walk).**

**END  
ALZ**

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(L-R) Pam Curtis, CEO of Senior Resources, Kayla Myers, Special Events Coordinator of the Alzheimer's Association-Great Lakes Chapter and Abbey Gannon, Senior Resources Chairman of the Walk to End Alzheimer's disease.



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# Mardi Gras in New Orleans

## “Throw me something, mister!”



BY JACKIE  
LINDRUP  
RDH, M.Ed.

We are standing on St. Charles Avenue in uptown New Orleans. It's a balmy Tuesday, Mardi Gras Day, and I am shouting and waving furiously at people as they ride by on giant floats. I try to catch someone's eye to plead with them to throw me some beads to hang around my empty neck.

Many people have thick piles of beads hanging around their necks already! Suddenly three colorful strands of plastic beads smack into my flailing hands and I catch one, and two fall to the ground at my feet. I quickly reach to the ground and grab the two hoping they are not broken or dirty. Once I heard that you are not supposed to pick up beads thrown from a float if they touch the ground. I have never paid attention to that rule! I put the three strands of beads around my neck. It's a good start to another great Mardi Gras Day watching the float parades followed by the best high school marching bands in the country. This is what my son Hunter calls “the wave” of Mardi Gras: first a float parade, then a marching band, in a wave continuing throughout the day.

Mardi Gras Day, or Fat Tuesday, is the major parade day and the actual end of Mardi Gras season, which begins right after Christmas. Evening parades begin in the smaller communities on weekends in January, and it gets busier closer to Mardi Gras Day. In New Orleans there is no school during the week of Mardi Gras. Businesses close. People visit and watch parades in their neighborhoods at night. Many elementary schools have parades with wagons decorated and pulled by children in costumes on the last day of school the week before Mardi Gras. This year there will be a total of 62 Mardi Gras parades!

My husband Tom could not believe that Mardi Gras was a family event! He had heard about the ladies raising their shirts and raucous partying in the French Quarter. I told him that's not what people in New Orleans do for Mardi Gras -- those might be Michiganders in town celebrating in their own way!



On Mardi Gras Day families find their favorite spot along the main parade route, St. Charles Avenue, and stay put for the day. Then friends who are riding on floats will be on the lookout for them and will throw them special toys, doubloons and beads when they see them. Children sit on top of tall ladders in special boxes made to hold all the treasures thrown to them by the people on the floats. Many people dress up in purple, green and gold, the official Mardi Gras colors. All people riding on the floats are in elaborate costumes and wear masks or painted faces.

In New Orleans there are beads up in the trees throughout the city from past parades. Besides collecting beads, another tradition is collecting plastic Mardi Gras

cups which are stacked up in cupboards by the dozens and are used as “to go” cups throughout the year. These are added to yearly since all drinks are served in these plastic cups during Mardi Gras.

In the late 60s when I first lived in New Orleans, it was a family tradition to take everything we'd need for the next day (table cloths, napkins, folding chairs, some of the food) down to Lafayette Square and leave a full car parked there. Then early on Mardi Gras morning, the family would get a ride back to Lafayette Square to set up for an all day picnic in the park and to watch the parades. Everyone in the family knew where you'd be, and ended up there for fried chicken, potato salad and a brownie sometime during the day.

Now that the kids are grown we usually take the ferry across the Mississippi River and walk to Canal Street to watch the parades with the grandkids. We also like to base ourselves out of the Columns Hotel on St. Charles Avenue. For \$20 we get a wristband that allows us access to the hotel, the big front porch for viewing, the bar inside and most importantly the washroom for the entire day. It's a great place to get away from the crowds, or to be right in the middle of them in front of the hotel!

Come to Mardi Gras and make your own great memories! Stand in the street and yell “Throw Me Something Mister!” As they say in New Orleans: “Laissez les bons temps rouler! Let the Good Times Roll!”

*Jackie Lindrup RDH, MEd. is a retired dental hygienist who enjoys golfing, hiking and kayaking, and traveling anywhere. She is the director of Volunteer for Dental, a community program which offers dental services for volunteer work to eligible Muskegon and Oceana residents. She also provides seminars for dental professionals.*

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jackielindrup111@gmail.com*



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# Out and About

She speed-walked past the Holiday Inn entrance toward the traffic circle at Western Avenue and Third Street in downtown Muskegon. Hobbled by an injury sustained in a pickleball match, I struggled to keep pace with my spouse.



BY  
JOEL  
DULYEA

"I'm not going to be able to keep up if you insist on walking fast."

Merijo replied, "We're supposed to be at the parking lot in five minutes."

A group of volunteers and staff from Kids' Food Basket were staged in the parking lot across

Western Avenue from the C.I.O. Headquarters building, awaiting the start of the St. Patrick Day Parade. The step-off was scheduled to start 30 minutes after we arrived in Muskegon. It seemed unnecessary to break from the comfortable saunter we enjoyed during the morning in Whitehall.

Our day started with a business expo and breakfast at Whitehall High School hosted by the Rotary Club. Shelley Williams, the Director of the White Lake Community Library, served up a breakfast of pancakes, eggs and sausage, made healthier by her familiar smile and distinct Indiana accent. In the

high school gymnasium filled with business displays, we shopped home and garden booths for ideas, sampled shrimp from Plumb's Grocery, and shared news with familiar faces. Richard, a fellow tenor from the Muskegon Chamber Choir, informed us he needed a new furnace for the home into which he and his wife had just moved. Shawna, with whom we sang in the White Lake Chorale, attended the adjacent booth for her son's wood finishing business. She shared news of her parents, Cal and Cheryl, with whom we volunteer in community service. Cal taught me the distinction between my generation (baby boomers) and his, which he described as the metallic gen-

eration. I had to ask, "What's the metallic generation?" He replied, "I have silver in my hair, gold in my teeth and lead in my butt." I had no stake in a mine from which I could reply.

With my wife "Merijo Andretti" driving, we left Whitehall for Muskegon and the sidewalk from which I called out with hope that she would slow down, "The parade doesn't start for 30 minutes."

Mercifully, the staccato of a car honk interrupted her pace and allowed me to join with her to turn and see an automobile stopped on Western just before the roundabout. Marian, a friend from church waved from the driver's open window. Earlier in the week we played team trivia at Handsome Hobo Pizzeria. Her team, named Funk and Wagnalls, placed first. Our team, Benght Phorks, finished out of last place but correctly answered one



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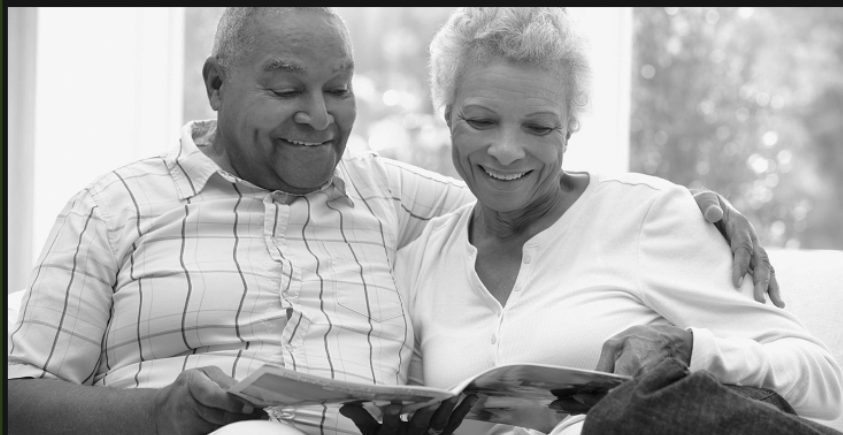
memorable question, “What are the six noble gases?” It’s good to have a son-in-law who knows how to weld and can remember the periodic table. Thank you, Brandon.

After an exchange of happy greetings, Marian drove away from beneath Buster Keaton’s bronze gaze and the Frauenthal Theater. As she circled past the sculpture “Muskegon, Together Rising,” I thought of shared experience in multiple connections that have nurtured our lives. Merijo intertwined her hand with mine and said, “I love that we’ve been here long enough to see people we know when we’re out and about.” That explained the day’s happiness and the hand in hand stroll to our destination.

*Joel Dulyea is a United States Army retiree who loves to sing with his wife Merijo, go on dates with his daughter and spoil his wire-haired dachshund, Heidi.*



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## MMAP Minutes

# Coming in 2018... What's Happening



Medicare is taking steps to remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards. Through this initiative, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will prevent fraud, fight identity theft and protect essential Medicare program funding and the private healthcare and financial information of each Medicare beneficiary.

BY  
ROBBI  
JUERGENS

### When this will happen?

Medicare will mail new Medicare cards between April 2018 and April 2019. Your new card will have a new Medicare Number that's unique to you, instead of your Social Security. This change will help to protect your identity.

### Things to know about your new card

- While you don't need to take any action to get your new Medicare card, make sure your mailing address is up to date. If your address needs to be corrected,

contact Social Security at [ssa.gov/myaccount](http://ssa.gov/myaccount) or 1-800-772-1213. TTY users can call 1-800-325-0778.

- The new card won't change your Medicare coverage or benefits.
- Medicare will never ask you to give personal or private information to get your new Medicare number and card.
- There's no charge for your new card.

### Watch out for scams

Scam artists may try to get your current Medicare number and other personal information by contacting you about your new Medicare card. They often claim to be from Medicare and use various scams to get your Medicare Number including:

- Asking you to confirm your Medicare or Social Security Number so they can send you a new card.
- Telling you there's a charge for your new card and they need to verify your personal information.
- Threatening to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your Medicare Number or other personal information.

- If someone calls you and asks

for your Medicare number or other personal information, hang up and call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

*Robbi Juergens is the Regional Coordinator for the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program and also the Evidence Based Program Coordinator.*



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BY  
CATHAY  
THIBDAUE

# Cathay's Cooking Corner



## Spaghetti Bolognese

Adapted from *Southern Living* Recipe

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2 tablespoons olive oil   | 1 teaspoon granulated sugar                                  |
| 1-pound sweet Italian sausage, without casings                            | 1/2 teaspoon salt  |
| 3/4 cup chopped sweet onion   | 1/4 teaspoon black pepper                                    |
| 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper   | 1 (16 oz.) package spaghetti or linguine noodles             |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced   | 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or 2 teaspoons dried basil |
| 1 (24 oz.) jar tomato and basil pasta sauce (such as Barilla or Classico) | Parmesan cheese (optional)                                   |

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add sausage, onion, bell pepper, and garlic, and cook, stirring, until sausage is browned, and vegetables are tender, 8 to 10 minutes.

Stir in pasta sauce, sugar, salt, and black pepper; bring mixture to a boil over medium-high. Reduce heat to low; simmer 15 minutes.

Cook pasta according to package directions, reserving 1/2 cup cooking water. Stir chopped basil into meat sauce. Stir in up to 1/2 cup reserved cooking water, adding 1/4 cup at a time, if needed, to reach desired consistency. Serve sauce over cooked noodles. Garnish with shaved Parmesan cheese, if desired.

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Source: Web MD, World's Healthiest Foods, TNS Photo Service



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# Rites of Spring



BY  
JERRY  
MATTSON

March Madness is not always just about basketball. For Steve and Janet Vold, this time includes making maple syrup at their home south of Whitehall.

This year marks their 13th year of producing syrup. Since beginning in 2003, they have improved their process and equipment. It takes about 45 gallons of sap to produce one gallon of syrup and lots of steam. Operating the “sugar bush” syrup production takes a lot of time and effort.

The sap flows in the spring because of pressure differences within the tree when the temperature fluctuates. Nighttime temperatures below freezing and daytime temperatures above 32 degrees create pressure conditions ideal for sap flow. Timing is also important, since if the tree’s buds are out, it’s too late.



Preparation includes getting the spiles (taps) out of storage, putting 7/16” bit in the drill and cleaning the stainless steel boiling pans. Next, maple trees are

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drilled and spiles driven in so sap may be collected in special plastic bags, or pails, from trees in their back yard. Steve empties each tree's collections into five-gallon pails and carries the sap to his clear plastic wrap-surrounded work area.

Within the enclosure is a firebox made of stacked cement blocks and fire brick. A wood fire supplies the heat needed to process the sap. On top of the firebox are two custom-made pans.

Steve first pours sap into the upper, 10-gallon, pan where it remains until it is boiling. When the time is right, he opens a valve and the sap is gravity-fed into the lower, 20-gallon, pan where it continues to boil while flowing in a zig-zag pattern around partitions toward one corner.

At the lower front corner is a valve which Steve opens to draw sap off into a cup to perform a taste test prior to the next step. "I can taste when it is about 90 to 95% on its way to being syrup," he said.

This is not an operation where you can set things in motion and then leave for a long period of time. It must be



closely watched with sap being added to pans and being drawn off at the proper time. When producing syrup, the Volds often get help from their three children and five grandchildren for some "family fun."

Nearing the end of the process, Steve heats a three-gallon pot of the sap on to 219 degrees F on a propane grill. The final cooking takes place on the kitchen stove, where the syrup is strained and ladled into glass containers. Janet performs the last step of the operation by putting the lids and rings on the jars. The Volds' largest yield, in 2014, was 16 gallons.

Steve and Janet grew up in Indiana, where basketball is revered. Steve, more than Janet, takes time to watch some of the NCAA playoff games on TV. These rites of spring combine to create up a special March Madness for this couple.

*Writing this story brought back memories for Jerry who, as a child, collected sap so his mother*

*could make syrup on the kitchen stove. He also did some chores for his two uncles who ran a commercial maple syrup operation for a few years.*

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(L-R) Pam Curtis, CEO of Senior Resources, Anne O'Dell of DTE Energy Foundation and Kris Collee, Executive Director of AgeWell Services.

## Annual DTE Free Holiday Meal for Seniors

AgeWell Services was proud to partner with the DTE Energy Foundation and Senior Resources to provide 2,700 meals to adults age 60 and older on Thursday, December 21st for residents in Oceana, Muskegon and Ottawa Counties. Volunteers from DTE Energy joined with AgeWell volunteers and staff to serve a holiday meal of roast pork, red skin smashed potatoes, green beans, salad, dinner roll, and a cheesecake with cherry topping. Meals were delivered to homebound seniors and served at congregate sites throughout our area. AgeWell Services prepared the meals and orchestrated the more than 50 delivery routes. More than 700 meals were delivered to homes, along with more than 1,200 congregate meals and several hundred more to other locations and programs in the three-county area. For more information regarding Meal on Wheels, contact AgeWell Services at 231-755-0434.



Don Cantu of DTE and Deb Bringedahl of Senior Resources help with the event.



BY  
CLIF  
MARTIN

## Martin's Meanderings Me & The Cat

There might be a grammarian out there who wishes I had written "The cat and I."

Well, I borrowed that title from Rod McKuen. Remember him? A cultural phenomenon of the late sixties. One of the best-selling poets of modern times.

My favorite McKuen verse, which he also recorded as a song, is that one about him and his cat. He had other cats, but I think that one was for "Sloopy." Sloopy became as famous as Rod was. Books, records and TV. The song lists all the things Rod and cat experienced together and the chorus ends with "Him with his whiskers, me and the cat."

McKuen had a beard. I don't know if the cat was one of those that likes hair

and beards. I don't have a beard but I don't shave for several days because my cat likes to rub her face on my stubbly chin.

We heard mewing in the attic. There was a kitten, no more than three days old. We got kitten formula and fed her with a doll bottle. I named her Willie because she had a will to live. We must have done something right. She's now a big girl. But she's still my baby. She looks like she is pretty content with her life.

You can hear Rod McKuen sing about him and his cat on the internet. Enter "Rod McKuen me and the cat" in your search engine.

*Note from Editor: I wanted to share some photos of Senior Resources' family and their cats.*



Top, L to R: Clif Martin with Willie, Abbey Gannon and Jake with Chase, Lisa Carlson with Harry, Brandi Waldman with Zeke and Gryffin. Center, L to R: Mike Fields with Creel, Teidda Vejck with Ramsay, Rory with kittens. Bottom, L to R: Ollie with Gracie, Cam with a cute cat from Noah's Project.



BY  
ROLINA  
VERMEER

# A Caregiver's Perspective

## Notes from my mother's daughter

Holidays, especially first holidays, after the death of a loved one, take on a new aura. This year at Christmas was no exception. Fresh on my heart was the ten year anniversary of the death of my father, who passed away two days before Christmas. We buried him with a blizzard raging around us, two days after Christmas. I have in my mind the image of a gray and frigid blustery day and all of us standing solemnly around the deep hole in the ground, my nephew, the youngest family member, tossing a single red rose onto the coffin down in that warm, dark, hollow space, secured from the wind. I still see that brilliant red rose as the only color of that heart-wrenching day.

He was so ill before he died, that for years I could not imagine my father any other way. Now, ten years later, he is coming back to life for me. His vigorous self appears in my heart and I am missing him more than ever. We toasted him, the family and I, on Christmas Eve when we gathered together as we always do. This year, we were missing my mother from the gathering for the first time. We toasted her too!



Christmas gatherings are meant to be happy occasions and ours was no exception. We all brought food for the appetizer table and grazed for a few hours, enjoying each other's company and catching up on busy lives. Then a remarkable thing happened in a most natural way. The younger relatives, the grandchildren, now all beautiful, smart and articulate adults, gathered around the parents in the living room. And a conversation referencing the lives of their grandpar-

ents, my mom and dad, blossomed into a discussion of my parents' involvement in the resistance movement in the Netherlands during WWII. My father's work in the Underground and my mother's subtle activism were shared again with the next generation. It was interesting, this quiet discussion. There were pieces of the story that came from my sister, and other pieces that came from my brother and also the stories that I knew. We, my siblings and I, each had a different offering as we wove the big picture.

Our parents were honored that Christmas Eve Day, as we passed along to the next generation part of the history that shaped them. And our hearts were soothed by the memories we had of many poignant conversations we had all enjoyed with them. Easter will allow for more sharing, I'm sure. And I suspect we might now be rather intentional about this very special and new way of celebrating a season and celebrating each other.

*Rolina Vermeer retired in April 2015 as Activity Director of Four Pointes Center for Successful Aging. Almost immediately thrust into her new role as her mother's caregiver, Rolina contributes articles related to her caregiving experience.*

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## Lessons for Life

# When the Obvious Is Not So Easy



BY  
CURTIS  
FREED

All of us are aware of the power of words. We are fully aware that words can harm as well as heal. A kind word said at the right time has the power to bring about encouragement when things are not looking so good. All of us can remember when something hurtful was said at the wrong moment. Those painful memories can last a lifetime.

Ira Byock, M.D., in *The Four Things That Matter Most* (Free Press, 2004) explains that when it comes to broken relationships, just eleven words can bring about healing and restoration. Dr. Byock is a hospice and palliative care physician and author. He is also a nationally recognized leader in the field of hospice and palliative care medicine. He has appeared on national television and radio shows such as NPR *All Things Considered*, CBS News *60 Minutes*, and Fox News *Fox and Friends*.

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Dr. Byock, by his own admission, does not consider himself a man of faith. Still, in his book he gives us four axioms that truly matter when it comes to the human experience. All of us, Dr. Byock contends, should practice these four life-affirming phrases, as we go about our daily lives.

“The Four Things That Matter Most” are just four simple phrases that can make an impact on the relationships that are most important to us.

Please forgive me.  
I forgive you.  
Thank you.  
I love you.

As a chaplain at Harbor Hospice, I found the “Four Things” to be extremely helpful as I work with patients and families at end of life. It reminds me of the 70-year-old woman who called two people to ask forgiveness a couple of months before she passed away. Then there was the 21-year-old young man who was at his mother’s bedside as she lay dying. She was a single parent who worked two jobs to provide for their family. This young man felt greatly relieved that he was able to tell her “thank you” for all she did to make their lives easier. I can recall the former pastor, who said to his son, “I love you and am very proud of you.” This pastor had been estranged from his son for many years. Each of these references are people that I have come across in my work. In each of these instances, there was some form of reconciliation or healing that took place before a loved one passed away.

At end of life, the only thing that truly matters in life is relationships. It does not matter so much what we did or did not do in life (although what we accomplish is important). The most important thing is that nothing is left unsaid to the people who matter most. The brevity of life serves as a reminder that we need to keep our relationships current.

Please read *The Four Things That Matter Most*. The “Four Things” are what we should practice on a regular, consistent basis. If you enjoy a good, heart-warming read, you will not be disappointed with this book.

*Curtis Freed joined Harbor Hospice in January of 2017 as a Spiritual Care Counselor. He is a Board Certified Chaplain (BCC) with the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). Prior to joining Harbor Hospice, he worked as a chaplain at Mercy VNS & Hospice for 3 years. In addition, he worked as a chaplain for Spectrum Health at Butterworth and Blodgett Hospitals for 8 years. He is a graduate of Liberty University (1987) and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary (1990).*



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# Our Perspective can shape reality



BY  
SUSAN  
HOWELL-STUK

My Norwegian relatives have a saying that goes “Det fines ikke darlig vaer, bare darling klaer.” Loosely translated it means “there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes.” This concept reflects a fundamental philosophy shared by most Scandinavians that winter is a lovely season to be embraced and appreciated rather than a dreary

season to be tolerated or endured as many of us have come to believe. By the time March rolls around, I usually find myself restless from cabin fever and complaining about low temperatures and gray skies. Winter came late this year, but when it finally blew in it arrived with an arctic blast and record-breaking snowfalls. One evening, my husband and I caught ourselves grumbling about the weather for the umpteenth time, and I decided I needed an attitude check. It was time for me to channel some of that Norwegian philosophy and adjust my mindset.

My perspective on winter wasn't always so bleak. Quite the contrary, I used to view winter as a beloved season with its own special magic. I think back to the winter I turned 15. My heart belonged to a handsome young man who I met at church. We attended the same high school, but I was a shy



and quiet sophomore while he was an athletic and gregarious senior who seemed to know everyone by name. Although our social circles overlapped, it was unlikely our paths would have crossed if not for the connection we formed in the church's youth group. I still remember the moment I realized he shared my affection. It was a cold, snowy winter night and some kids from our group were goofing around outdoors.

The air felt frosty as it hit my face, and the ground crunched under my boots as we ran around laughing and throwing snow balls. I found myself face to face with this young man. His wide brown eyes danced with energy and life, and I was certain the dark lashes that framed them were the longest I had ever seen.

He opened his mouth, and I inhaled deeply anticipating a sweet declaration of some sort to cross his lips. Instead his mouth softened into a dimpled smile as he smashed an enormous fluffy snowball right on top of my head. Snow slid down my neck and past my collar. My hair was damp and my mittens were soaked but my heart was warm and I could feel that winter magic in the air.

So much of that evening was shaped by my attitude. My feelings of excitement and expectation shaped my experience that night. The snow was cold but I felt alive. Do you believe we can shape our thoughts to shape our lives? I do, we just need to remind ourselves that it is possible. Our perspective, or way of seeing the world, influences our behavior and our choices about how we interact with others and with the environment around us. And as such, our thoughts and perspective can change the way we experience reality. So as late winter gives way to early spring, I encourage you to see it with fresh eyes. Pile on the layers, remembering to cover your neck, wrists and ankles to help keep you warm, and venture out to try something new. Maybe head out to an Ottawa County Park for XC Skiing or Snow Shoeing. Or bring your young grandchildren to the Easter Egg Hunt on March 31st at Central Park in either Grand Haven or Spring Lake. Or watch top rowing teams from all over the Midwest compete on Spring Lake for the April 13th Don Lubbers Cup Regatta. Or if you still aren't convinced to head out into the cold, find ways to embrace the coziness and restful state that our Michigan winter can bring. After all, that winter magic is still there, waiting for you to open your mind to discover it.

*Susan Howell-Stuk is the President of Four Pointes Center for Successful Aging in Grand Haven. Susan is a wife, mother, and professional who believes whole person wellness must address our physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual health.*



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# Keith's World

## Behind the Scene

Recently, I talked to a friend of mine on the phone -- a beautiful lady, whose friendship I cherish deeply.

I think it was in 2011 that I first met Joan through *Senior Perspectives*. She is a dedicated reader and after reading one of my articles, she wanted to contact me. I received a phone call from former editor of *Senior Perspectives*, Cheryl Snow, that Joan wanted to talk to me.

Joan was looking for some photos and wondered if I had any of old Muskegon. We set up a time to meet at her home. When I arrived, I had the surprise of my life! She had far more photos and history of Muskegon than one could ever imagine.

During our many visits that followed, the history of Muskegon came alive and my knowledge of Muskegon grew. That was when I discovered I knew very little of my hometown of Muskegon.

At the Century Club Retail Center on Western Avenue in downtown Muskegon, we decided to do something special each month to bring more people downtown. I started by calling and emailing all my friends. We put up posters and made phone calls to



BY  
KEITH  
SIPE

promote the Century Club Retail Center. Many people showed up for the Saturday event. We had areas where you could sit around tables and enjoy snacks and conversation with other customers.

One of the writers from *Senior Perspectives*, and also a friend of mine, Al Scheider, came to visit us at the Century Club Retail Center, as did Joan Gawron

whom I had invited to come. That was the day that Al first met Joan.

The open house at the Century Club Retail Center was a success, so it was decided to do another the following month. Al came back and I noticed him sitting at a table. I sat down and started to talk to him over a cup of coffee. During the conversation, Joan's name came up. Al wondered if Joan was going to stop by. I gave her a call and she said "sometime after lunch."

Around 2:00 p.m. Joan arrived. I greeted her and said "Someone is here to see you." and took her over to Al. That was beginning of a wonderful friendship.

Once Joan had told me the story of her first date with her husband around 65 years ago, when he took her to U.S. 31 Bar-B-Q on Ottawa Street. Now Al wanted to take her out to dinner and where do you think he

took Joan? Yes, you guessed it -- U.S. 31 Bar-B-Q, on Muskegon Avenue at Jefferson. What a coincidence.

Al was a great writer and had written for *Senior Perspectives* for many years. He also belonged to a writers group where he introduced Joan and soon she became involved as well. She and Al actually have a book or two out there with the other writers from their group.

There was a special bond between Al and Joan. They would spend much time together and their love for each other grew even more. When they couldn't get together, one would call at 4:00 p.m., then the other would call back at 9:00 p.m. to say good-night

This special relationship that Al and Joan shared continued until Al passed away. Even to this day, Joan shares her thoughts of Al to me. *Senior Perspectives* brought Joan and me together through my articles and brought Al Scheider to Joan as well.

*Senior Perspectives* is a paper that not only has many great writers and interesting articles, but answers many questions. Questions like health care, senior care, exercise, recipes, assisted living, and so much more. Oh, and it even brings two people together..

*Keith may be reached at [rightseat625bg@gmail.com](mailto:rightseat625bg@gmail.com) Please drop him a note, he loves the attention, well, loves hearing from you. Keith enjoys writing, photography, flying, cooking, history, biking and lives in downtown Muskegon.*

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# Traveler Tales

## These boots were made for walking



BY  
JAY  
NEUMARCH

Can there be anything worse than trying to immerse yourself in a new place, a new experience, and all you can think about is how badly your feet hurt? I have been in that very situation, hobbling about, trying to enjoy my surroundings while my feet screamed, "I demand your undivided attention!"

If people doubt that age makes you wiser, I'd point at my feet. Yes, I've been guilty of rewarding pride over personal comfort. I remember times where I chose my footwear strictly on how it matched what I was wearing that day.

Coincidentally, I also remember my very worst instance of looks over comfort.

I had, against budgetary wisdom, purchased a pair of designer shoes. To be sure, they looked great. But, they also were the least comfortable pair of shoes I've ever had on my feet. I was determined, instance by uncomfortable instance, to break these shoes and make them a regular part of life. Instead, they finally broke me. With bloody heels that would not allow me a thought of putting the shoes back on, I carried them in my hands as I walked through the parking garage. The shoes never touched

my feet again. Even though I gave them to charity, I'm still not convinced that it was a charitable act.

Age and instances of discomfort have made me much wiser about how and why I choose what adorns my feet. My main concern these days is how my feet feel, not what my footwear says about me. This leads me to the boots you see in this story. I didn't purchase these boots with the thought that they would be my ongoing travel buddies, but that seems to be their role these days.

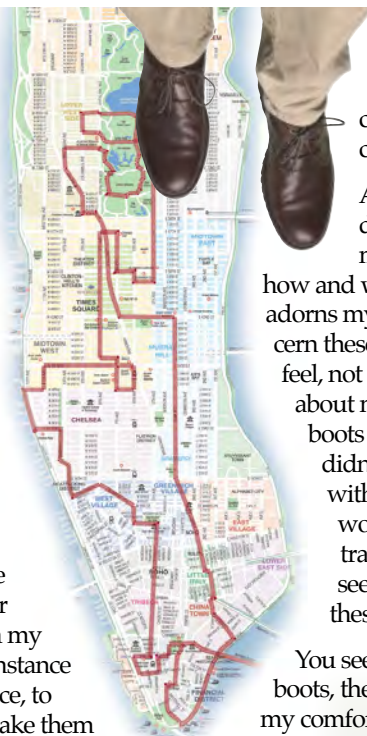
You see, the more I wore these boots, the more they became my comfortable, go-to footwear when all I was concerned about was keeping my feet happy.

Departing on a trip to Denver a couple of years ago, I randomly decided to take these boots. After walking from one side of downtown Denver and back again,

they earned packing space on every trip since. Beyond Denver, they've walked streets, trails, woods and beaches from coast to coast. Most recently, they helped me take a whirlwind walking tour of New York City during the holidays. From Wall Street to the Upper West Side, they were my footwear of choice. Are they always the best choice visually? Absolutely not. Are they always the best choice for my feet? A resounding, yes!

While this may be more than you want to know about my feet and my choice of footwear, there is a moral to this story. When traveling, ALWAYS think of your feet first. Don't worry about how your feet look, worry about how they feel. Find your own perfect footwear and bring them wherever you go. Take this advice and not only will you be thanking me, your feet will thank you by allowing you to enjoy your trip without the interruption of sore, painful feet. Now, go hit the road in perfect comfort!

*Jay Neumarch is a marketing professional and graphic artist living in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Jay designs the Senior Perspectives publication for Senior Resources and is an avid traveller who takes every opportunity to visit different corners of the world.*







## save the date

AgeWell Services of West Michigan's 5th Annual Fundraiser to raise money for meal programs: Meals on Wheels and Meal Sites

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# Authors of West Michigan

Note from the writer: The Bookman enjoys wonderful local authors. One author in particular exudes energy and enthusiasm for both his own work and the work of others. We would like you to meet Steve LeBel.

## the bookman

BY DIANE STEGGERDA

Steve LeBel was born in Maine on April 7, 1948. "Forever young," he does admit to Senior status. Growing up in Muskegon, earning degrees from MSU and U of M, "Michigander" can be added as well. With degrees in Psychology and Guidance and Counseling, during the next two decades he moved along a path of service. He began in the Flint area working for the State of Michigan, first as an employment counselor, then advancing into his field of vocational rehabilitation, substance abuse, and mental health treatment nonprofit programs. Steve's work life exemplifies the Butterfly Effect: his imagination expands in concentric and periphery circles simultaneously. Every expansion is based on need, purpose, and service. He continued through several administrative roles in treatment agencies, eventually choosing to stay and become President and CEO of Insight Recovery Centers, developing many treatment centers throughout the nation.

Steve's career winds like a mountain road with each curve opening into a new vista of accomplishment. He began to see the imaginative possibilities in the computer and internet age. Retiring from the Recovery Centers, he built a series of businesses based on his self-taught computer programming skills. His successful companies offered a wide range of internet services.

His knowledge and experience led him through a switch-back to reside again in Muskegon where he continues to be an active Day Trader. This afforded him an unexpected, beneficial side effect: time to write. And, it opened a way to honor his 7th grade teacher, Mrs. Grace George, at Lincoln School, (Mona Shores Middle School).

In 7th grade, Steve showed an interest in Science Fiction, and she wrote this comment to him: "Good luck, Steve. I hope I'll read some of your science fiction someday." He recently found both her comment, AND Mrs. George. She got her wish when

he took her to lunch and presented her with a copy of his first book, *The Universe Builders: Bernie and the Putty*, 2014.

Bernie is the main character in his science-based, "G-rated," humorous fantasy, adult/young adult novels that have already won sixteen awards. These concentric circles are far-out fun. The idea of Universe Building stems from a former college roommate's lament. After doing poorly in a science class, he complained that "God must have got a C- in

Universe Building 101." In Steve's stories, Bernie is born into a community of gods, both male and female. Everyone is either a god or a god to be. In this

first book, Bernie has just graduated from college, and his first job is to build a universe. Steve's imagination creates many intriguing problems and solutions for Bernie. The series continues with *Bernie and the Lost Girl*, 2016; *Bernie and the Wizards*, 2017; and Steve is working on Bernie's next assignment.

The maze of publishing and marketing was new to Steve, and as he sensed a need, another curve appeared, opening to another purpose and a place for service. With Steve in the lead, a small group of writers formed their own

publishing company, Argon Press, which publishes and promotes their work. This business venture led to beginning an author association, Michigan Authors. Using social media, it is a resource for publishing, promoting, marketing and the general business of



*I hope I'll read some of your science fiction someday.  
Mrs. George  
1961*

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# Hope Spring Eternal

## 10 Reasons to Hope



BY  
JANET  
HASSELBRING

*“Whenever you read these words, day or night, there are birds in the heavens of the Western Hemisphere, migrating.”*

(Weidensaul)

Spring is in the air. As human snowbirds head home, their mass exodus is duplicated by millions of aerial fliers weaving an incredible tapestry across the heavens, travelling from as far south as Patagonia, north to the Arctic mudflats. While human snowbirds navigate with complex GPS systems, these avian flying machines’ navigational systems are embedded in their brains.

They face incredible odds on their migratory flights: predators, storms, exhaustion, dehydration, satellite towers (over 75,000 of them!), windmills, skyscrapers lit at night.

“Hope springs eternal,” states Alexander Pope in “An Essay on Man,” whose dictum is as profound as it is poetic, hope being the belief that in difficult circumstances, things will get better. Hope is unique to our species because it requires words and thoughts to contemplate possible future events. While birds may sense impending events, such as crashing into a metal needle piercing the sky, they cannot conceptualize the future.

These feathered dynamos need hope, but according to Emily Dickinson, they also inspire hope with their amazing aerial feats:

*“Hope is a thing with feathers,  
That perches in the soul.  
It sings the song without the words  
And never stops at all.”*

(Dickinson)

1. Blackpoll Warbler – this little meatball, weighing 1/3 – 1/2 ounce (an empty pop can), and 4” long, skims wooded peaks, skirts urban skyscrapers, and crosses vast stretches of water, for 9,000 miles, chasing summer.

2. Red Knot – also known as the moonbird, because in its 20 years of flight, it will have flown the equivalent distance of to the moon and back

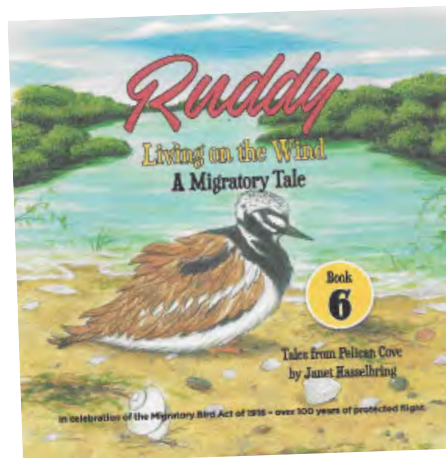
3. Arctic Tern – weighing in at less than half a pound, it makes the longest migration of any animal in the world - 44,000 miles annually.

4. White-Rumped Sandpiper – flies 9,000 miles twice a year.

5. Golden Plover – not quite a foot long, weighing all of 6 ounces, this hardy bird flings itself into the air twice every year for a journey of nearly 20,000 miles. It can reach air speeds of 70 mph.

6. Black-Bellied Dunlin - flying so tightly packed, they seem scarcely a wingspan apart, these birds wheel and turn in perfect synchronization, exhibiting a phenomenon known as cluster flocking.

7. Whimbrels – Location, location, location – finally home, these birds nest in the hummock bogs of the Hudson Bay lowlands, where, at best, 86% of the nests will have one surviving egg.



8. Spectacled Eider – braving the winter gales and sub-zero temperatures of the Arctic tundra, Eiders stay home, their bodies designed expressly for life in the frigid waters of the Arctic.

9. Ruddy Turnstone – “The moon and stars are fading... when another enemy strikes – this one a killer. Out of the mist, a metal needle emerges. Ruddy veers to the left, missing the needle’s fangs by a hair’s breadth. Splat! The entire right wing of the flock crashes into the tower. They are killed instantly. The flock shudders, resets position, and flies on. The feathered remains of their fellow explode into the air and drift to the ground.” (Ruddy: Living on the Wind, Hasselbring)

10. Ruddy’s Shebird – leaving two weeks after the males, the turnstone Shebirds hope to meet up with their mates in the Arctic, where they will nest and breed.

*“Hope springs eternal in the human breast:  
Man never is, but always to be blest:  
The soul, uneasy and confin’d from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.”*

(An Essay on Man)

Sources : Book of North American Birds, Reader’s Digest & Field Guide to Birds, National Geographic

Janet Hasselbring is a retired educator and musician. She resides in Spring Lake, MI with her husband and Welsh terrier, Maggie May. They winter in FL, where she is inspired to write her children’s books, featuring the wild/shorebirds of FL and beyond. She has also written a series about her family farm, Country Dairy. For additional musings on her mother visit <https://janethasselbring.com/blog/> or [janhasselbring.blogspot.com](http://janhasselbring.blogspot.com)

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**Question:** If I have a question about my Medicare bill, who should I contact?

**Answer:** First, contact your provider. If you are unable to get your question answered or the problem resolved, then contact 1-800 MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). For more information about Medicare benefits, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).



BY  
VONDA  
VANTIL

**Question:** I've been receiving SSI for a few years and recently went back to work. My boss wants me to work full time and I feel like I can do the job, but I'm concerned about losing my Medicaid coverage. If my SSI payments stop due to my earnings, can I still keep my Medicaid?

**Answer:** In most cases, Medicaid coverage will continue even if your earned income is too high to receive an SSI payment. In order to qualify for this coverage, the following provisions apply:

- You are still blind or have a disability; and
- You meet all the SSI eligibility requirements, except for the amount of your earnings; and
- You were eligible to receive a regular SSI cash payment for at least one month before you became eligible under Section 1619 of the Social Security Act; and
- You were eligible for Medicaid coverage in the month before you became eligible under Section 1619; and
- You need continued Medicaid in order to work; and
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The amount you can earn and still receive Medicaid varies from state to state. You may call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY: 1-800-325-0778) for more information.



**Question:** My grandmother receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. She may have to enter a nursing home to get the long-term care she needs. How does this affect her SSI benefits?

**Answer:** Moving to a nursing home could affect your grandmother's SSI benefits, depending on the type of facility. In many cases, we have to reduce or stop SSI payments to nursing home residents, including when Medicaid covers the cost of the nursing home care. When your grandmother enters or leaves a nursing home, assisted living facility, hospital, skilled nursing facility, or any other kind of institution, you must notify Social Security right away. Learn more about SSI reporting responsibilities at [www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi). You can call Social Security's toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) to report a change.

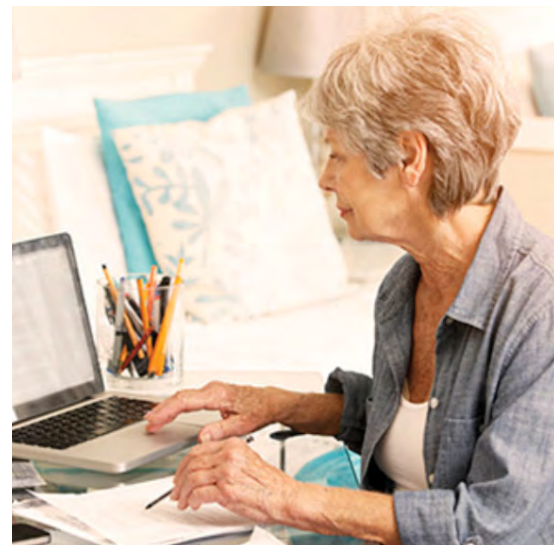
**Question:** Although I stopped working a few years ago, I had additional seasonal earnings after my retirement. Will my monthly Social Security retirement benefit increase?

**Answer:** Each year, we review the records for all working Social Security recipients to see if additional earnings may increase their monthly benefit amounts. If an increase is due, we calculate a new benefit amount and pay the increase retroactive to January following the year of earnings. You can learn more about how work affects your benefits

by reading our publication, *How Work Affects Your Benefits*, at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs)

**Question:** I'm retiring early, at age 62, and I receive investment income from a rental property I own. Does investment income count as earnings?

**Answer:** No. We count only the wages you earn from a job or your net profit if you're self-employed. Non-work income such as annuities, investment income, interest, capital gains, and other government benefits are not counted and will not affect your Social Security benefits. Most pensions will not affect your benefits. However, your



benefit may be affected by government pensions earned through work on which you did not pay Social Security tax. You can retire online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). For more information, call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

*Vonda VanTil is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at [vonda.vantil@ssa.gov](mailto:vonda.vantil@ssa.gov)*

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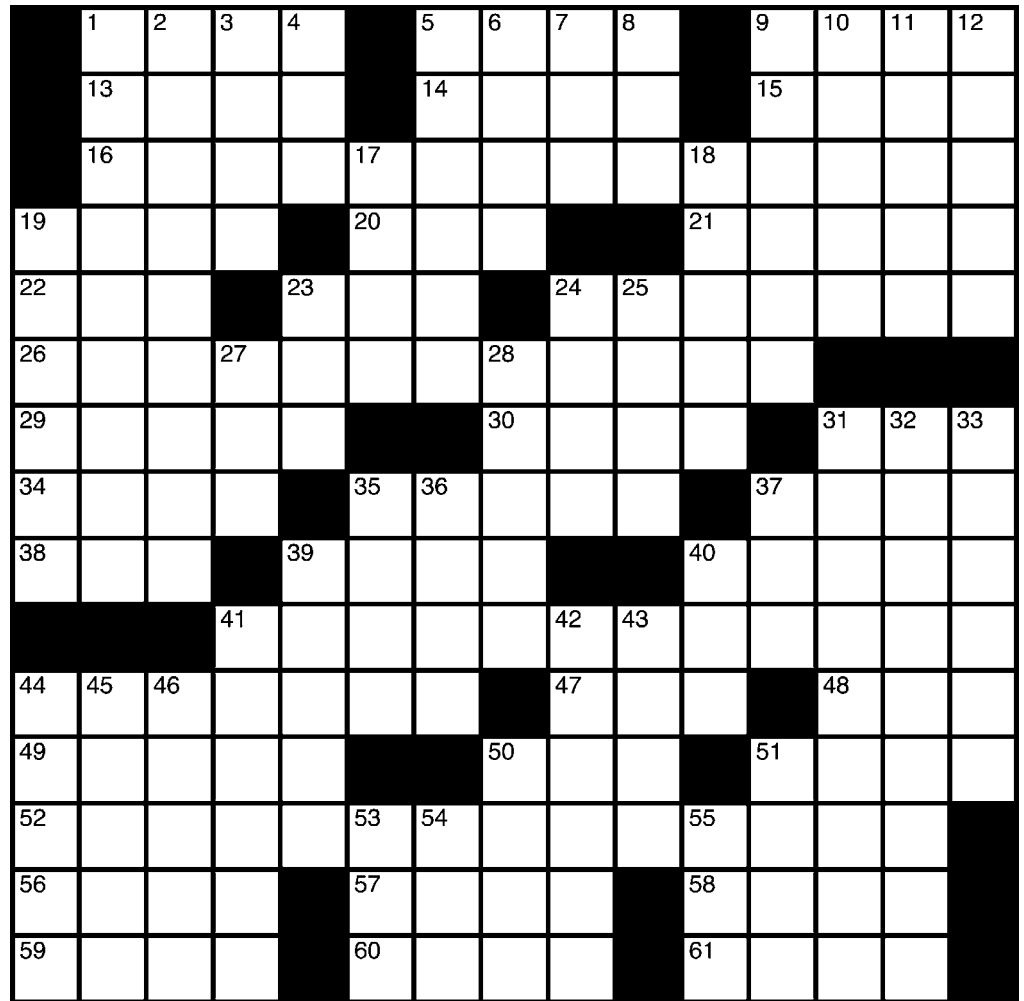
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**OTTAWA COUNTY FARM BUREAU**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Little fight
- 5 Scurries, old-style
- 9 Prefix with chute
- 13 Other than that
- 14 \_\_ buco: veal dish
- 15 Hieroglyphics bird
- 16 Madonna hit with the lyrics "I'm keeping my baby"
- 19 Lacking
- 20 Choose (to)
- 21 Roast host
- 22 Add up to, in arithmetic
- 23 Skinny swimmer
- 24 Live-in nannies
- 26 Like some family-owned businesses
- 29 Kindle buy
- 30 Hops-drying oven
- 31 Woolf's "\_\_ Dalloway"
- 34 Narrow cut
- 35 Bake, as eggs
- 37 Veggie that can be pickled
- 38 Title time traveler with Bill
- 39 Fellas
- 40 Hardship
- 41 2003 Eddie Murphy movie about an entrepreneurial stay-at-home parent
- 44 Cast maligning remarks at
- 47 Watch closely
- 48 Sleuths, for short
- 49 Meager
- 50 Tavern brew
- 51 Ladies
- 52 Propose marriage
- 56 Olympian's blade
- 57 Baseball tactic to advance a runner
- 58 Desire
- 59 Stereotypical techie
- 60 Make less intense, as one's breath
- 61 Iowa State city

- 11 Potato cutter
- 12 Lenten symbol
- 17 Couch potato's opposite
- 18 Move to a new container, as a houseplant
- 19 Least dangerous
- 23 Startled cry
- 24 Hebrew winter month
- 25 Cold War country: Abbr.
- 27 Selling really well
- 28 Clangorous
- 31 Cheerleader's sound booster
- 32 Adjusts the position of
- 33 Emphasize
- 35 Soap bubbles
- 36 Jekyll's murderous other self
- 37 Ballpoint brand
- 39 Brooks of country music
- 40 Pastrami sandwich bread
- 41 A little banged up, fenderwise
- 42 Backspace over
- 43 Yes votes
- 44 Colorado ski resort
- 45 Range
- 46 Origami medium
- 50 Em, to Dorothy
- 51 Former name of Thailand
- 53 Flow back
- 54 Sine \_\_ non: essential
- 55 Pan Am rival



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**DOWN**

- 1 Unlike bosom buddies
- 2 Smallish celestial body
- 3 Hieroglyphics snakes
- 4 Beverage leaves
- 5 Showy publicity
- 6 "This \_\_ working"
- 7 D.C. winter clock setting
- 8 Soak (up), as sauce
- 9 Merchant whom Simple Simon met
- 10 Beaded calculators



**JUMBLE**

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

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ROPIR

SEGUT

TOXCIE

TAMETR

Check out the new, free JUST JUMBLE app

**THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME**  
by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

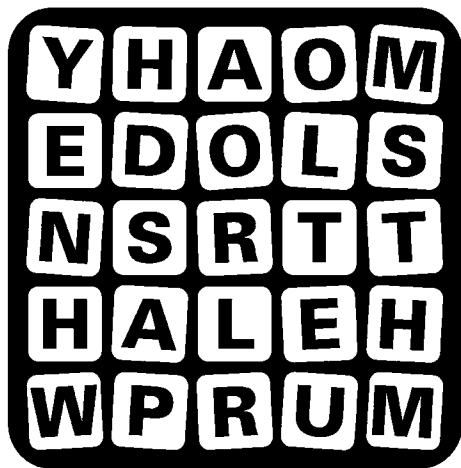
Print your answer here: "  -  "



1			7	2				5
	2							9
9	4		8		3		1	
						5	8	
			3		2			
	5	6						
	3		9		5		4	6
5							2	
6				8	4			7

## SENIOR PERSPECTIVES GAME PAGE

Answers on Page 35



By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Find as many words as you can by linking letters up, down, side-to-side and diagonally, writing words on a blank sheet of paper. You may only use each letter box once within a single word. Play with a friend and compare word finds, crossing out common words.

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We put special brain-busting words into the puzzle grid. Can you find them?

Find **AT LEAST EIGHT FIVE-LETTER MAMMALS** in the grid of letters.

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# New Kid on the Block



BY  
DICK  
HOFFSTEDT

"The new kid on the block" is a phrase that first appeared in 1941 in a comic strip called "Skippy." It has survived and pops up once in a while in articles and conversations.

I had a problem choosing one instance in my life where I was that "new kid." There were many times when I entered a situation where I was a stranger among a group of people that shared common interests or goals. I finally settled on one that happened to me when I was in the army stationed at Fort Bragg, NC. It was in the mid '50s when segregation was still in full swing in the South. Racism was widespread.

Coming back to camp after my Christmas leave in 1955, I learned that my company had a basketball team that competed in our battalion basketball tournament every winter. A notice on our bulletin board said that they were looking for some more players to fill in some empty spots on their roster.

Before I was drafted, I had played quite a bit of basketball in high school and my first two years in college. I was not a top player, maybe just a little above average. I was not a big scorer but was more of what is referred to as a "play-maker." I didn't care who scored as long as our team won.

After seeing the notice, I contacted the team coach, who was a master-sergeant with fiery red hair, a ruddy complexion and a barrel chest. He was intimidating. I wanted to play, so I tried out and made the team. Not only that, he put me on the starting five and to my complete surprise he made me team captain. The other team members were not consulted or given a vote in the matter which is usually the case in choosing a team captain. I was puzzled as to why he chose me.

We went on to capture our battalion championship, and that made us eligible to compete in Fort Bragg's annual post tournament. To my amazement, we also went on to win that prestigious contest. When it came time to receive our team trophy in a big celebration, the coach said that I was the guy he wanted to accept it. I didn't think I deserved that honor. The other four guys on our starting five all scored more points than I did throughout the tourney and played superbly. I thought one of them should accept it, but the coach had the final say.

By the way, I didn't tell you that the other four guys were all young, great African-American players. I believe he chose me because he didn't want a black player accepting the award. That's how it was for me as the "new kid on the block."



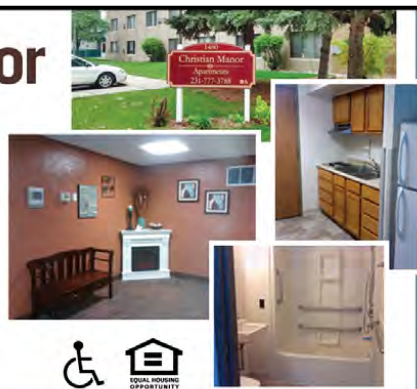
Fort Bragg, North Carolina  
March 23, 1956

*Richard Hoffstedt was born to Swedish immigrants in 1934 and raised in Chicago. He is a U.S. Army veteran. He has been married to Shirley for 62 years. Richard has four daughters, twin sons, four grandsons, one granddaughter, one great granddaughter and two great grandsons. Richard is an engineer by profession. His interests are music, reading, travel, riding his adult tricycle, Mark Twain and John Steinbeck.*

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BY  
LISA  
TYLER

# About Us: Navigating the Senior Resources Website

Have you visited our website, <https://seniorresourceswmi.org>? It is full of great information that you can access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To help familiarize you with it, this year in each issue of Senior Perspectives we'll focus on a different page of our website. Check back with us next time to review another page on our website!

## Resources

The Resources tab is at the top, and shares a variety of information relating to older adults. The main page reminds you to tell us your story, so that we can provide assistance to you or a family member or friend. You can call our Options Counselors at 231-733-3585, or 1-800-442-0054. We have a local number for Oceana County residents – 559-0331. You can also email us at [info@seniorresourceswmi.org](mailto:info@seniorresourceswmi.org) any time of day or night with your questions, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible during our business day.

On the left side are several tabs; we'll look at them individually:

## Navigating Older Adult Resources

When you click on this tab, it provides more information about calling our Options Counselors for questions on things like housing options, transportation, long-term care services, respite, legal, personal care and more. You can also click to complete an online inquiry, which goes directly to our staff for follow-up.

## Caregivers Corner

This section is designed for the caregiver of an older adult. You can view the monthly Caregiver Link newsletter, which provides articles, websites and book reviews relating to caregiving for older adults. There is also information about our Savvy Caregiver program, the weekly Caregiver Support Group at Tanglewood Park, as well as monthly and weekly support groups in Ottawa County.

There are further options for seeking more information on Alzheimer's, Project Lifesaver, and caregiver resource libraries.

## Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP)

MMAP is a program that helps people with questions on health care benefits, especially Medicare Parts A & B, prescription drug plans, supplemental insurance, and Medicare Advantage options, and more. Volunteer counselors can provide unbiased information on health care benefits, since the program is funded by the federal and state government, and not from any health plans. There are MMAP counselors available in Muskegon, Oceana and Ottawa counties.

This section also provides information on Senior Scams relating to Medicare and Medicaid.

## Healthy Aging

This page shares programs that can help keep older adults well, including Fit and Strong, Diabetes PATH, Matter of Balance, and more. There are descriptions

of a variety of programs offered through Senior Resources; for more information about any of them, contact Amy Florea at 231-733-3519, or [amy@seniorresourceswmi.org](mailto:amy@seniorresourceswmi.org).

## Pathways to Better Health

This is a community outreach program that connects people with two or more chronic conditions to local resources. This partnership with the Muskegon Community Health Project places a Community Health Worker at Senior Resources (and other locations throughout the county). The Community Health Worker helps participants set health improvement goals, and helps find them resources to reach those goals. For more information, or to make a referral, call 231-672-3305.

## Eldercare Locator

This last area on the left side is a link to any Area Agency on Aging in the United States, through [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov). The Eldercare Locator is a service of the U.S. Administration on Aging.

The Senior Resources website is full of great information. Please check it out, and share any feedback you have with me: [lt Tyler@seniorresourceswmi.org](mailto:lt Tyler@seniorresourceswmi.org). We're always looking to improve the information we have, so we welcome your thoughts!

We'll share another page of our website in the May/June issue of *Senior Perspectives*.

*Lisa Tyler is the Communications Director at Senior Resources. She stays busy with her husband and two children – Nick, a freshman at MSU (her alma mater), and Hannah, a junior at Mona Shores High School. She also serves on the MAISD board of education and chairs the Muskegon advisory committee of Kids' Food Basket.*

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# Ask the Provider

## Urinary Incontinence— NOT a Normal Part of Aging

**Question:** What is urinary incontinence?

**Answer:** Urinary incontinence is an involuntary loss of urine that can lead to problems with hygiene, skin rash or wounds, falls, depression, insomnia, and significant social embarrassment and isolation.

**Question:** What are the most common symptoms of urinary incontinence?

**Answer:** Symptoms include trouble controlling the bladder, an inability to make it to the bathroom in time, or



BY  
ARUNA  
JOSYULA, MD



BY  
JASON  
BENNETT, MD

leaking urine when coughing, sneezing or laughing.

**Question:** How common is this disease/condition? Do men and women get it?

**Answer:** In the United States, urinary incontinence can affect 15–30 percent of people 65 years or older living in a community and 60–70 percent of people living in long-term facilities. Until about the age of 80 years, it affects women more than men (at a ratio of about 2 to 1). After age 80 years, it affects men and women equally.

**Question:** Is urinary incontinence a natural part of aging?

**Answer:** Urinary incontinence is increasingly common as people get older, but it is NOT a normal part of aging, and patients don't have to just "deal with it."

**Question:** What are the causes of urinary incontinence?

**Answer:** Many medical conditions can cause urinary incontinence, including—but not limited to—diabetes, constipation, stroke or urinary tract infections. Medications can cause or worsen incontinence. Structural problems with pelvic organs or pelvic muscles can lead to incontinence.

**Question:** How is urinary incontinence diagnosed?

**Answer:** Primary care physicians can make a diagnosis of urinary incontinence by gathering information about a person's medical conditions, medications and by physical exam, urine analysis and information about fluid intake and bladder habits. Some people may require a more thorough evaluation by specialists.

**Question:** Broadly speaking, what are the medical options for treating urinary incontinence?

**Answer:** Treatment of urinary incontinence can involve lifestyle modifications (such as weight loss and avoiding excessive fluids, caffeinated drinks or alcohol), behavioral modifications (such as bladder training and pelvic muscle exercises like Kegel exercises), reducing or removing medications that cause incontinence, and treating medical conditions that contribute to incontinence. A physician may also prescribe medications to treat incontinence. Incontinence pads or adult briefs can be used as well.

**Question:** When is it time to seek a specialist for this condition/disease?

**Answer:** If the previously mentioned treatments are not effective, referral to a gynecologist, urologist, urogynecologist, or bladder clinic may be appropriate.

*If you have concerns about urinary incontinence, you are invited to contact Mercy Health Physician Partners Geriatrics by calling 231.672.6740 or Mercy Health Physician Partners Rivertown at 231.727.7944.*

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BY  
VONDA  
VANTIL

# Rosie the Riveter: Working Women's Icon

"Rosie the Riveter" is an American icon representing women working in factories during World

War II. These women learned new jobs and filled in for the men who were away at war. They produced much of the armaments and ammunition to supply the war effort.

They also paid FICA on their wages, contributing to the Social Security program. These "Rosies" embodied the "can-do" spirit immortalized in a poster by J. Howard Miller. Both the image and the spirit live on today.

If you asked Rosie about Social Security, she would use her rivet gun to drive home the value of Social Security for women. More Rosies work today, and nearly 60 percent of people receiving benefits are women. Women tend to live longer than men, so Social Security's inflation-adjusted benefits help protect women. You can outlive your savings and investments, but Social Security is for life. Women provide their own basic level of protection when they work and pay taxes into the Social Security system. Women who have been married and had low earnings or who didn't work may be covered through their spouses' work.

Today's Rosie will turn her "can-do" spirit to learning more about Social Security and what role it will play in her financial plan for the future. She focuses on our pamphlet called What



Every Woman Should Know available at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10127.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10127.html) for a game plan.

She rolls up her sleeves and sets up her my Social Security account ([www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount)) to review her earnings and estimates. If she finds an incorrect posting, she'll locate her W-2 form and quickly contact Social Security to correct it because she understands these are the earnings used to figure her benefits.

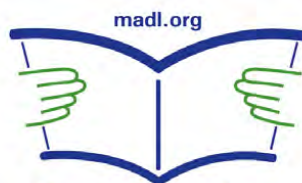
She dives into understanding benefits at our planner pages at [www.socialsecurity.gov/planners](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/planners). She examines how marriage, divorce, death of a spouse, work, and other issues might affect her benefits. She studies our fact sheet

When to Start Receiving Retirement Benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/) to help her decide when it's time. And when the time is right, she will file for retirement benefits online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/retire](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire). Whether it was keeping the war effort production lines humming or discovering what is available to her from Social Security, Rosie symbolizes the motto: "We Can Do It." Rosie and millions like her rely on the financial protection provided by Social Security in assembling their own financial futures.

*Vonda VanTil is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at [vonda.vantil@ssa.gov](mailto:vonda.vantil@ssa.gov)*

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# Let's go hunting for Turkeys!



BY  
LOUISE  
MATZ

Spring turkey hunting is my favorite kind of hunting. Talking to the turkeys and having them respond is a thrill. It's even more thrilling when the response keeps coming closer and closer.

Are we ever too old for turkey hunting? I don't think so. Maybe we won't walk as deep into the woods or chase a turkey like we did when we had young legs,

but I can tell you about a couple of recent successful hunts that required very little physical strength and endurance.

A few years ago my husband Tom and I were hunting turkeys. We walked and walked and called and called with no response. Exhausted, we decided to give it one more try before heading home. We headed to a spot with several two-tracks. My husband dropped me off at one end of the property and he went to the other. Instead of walking and calling, I simply found a spot, set up my decoy, and plopped against a tree. I was even thinking of closing my eyes. But, first, maybe I should give a shout out with my box call. Imagine my surprise when I heard distant gobbles from three different directions! Wide awake now, I continued my calling. After several calls, maybe a half hour, the gobbles from two directions disappeared. However, the gobbles from one direction were stronger than ever. I quit calling, aimed my gun near the decoy, and waited. In less than

five minutes, I had four tom turkeys walk across the two-track and up to my decoy. BANG! Three turkeys ran away and I had a nice tom for dinner.

On another occasion when husband Tom was recuperating from surgery, we went to our daughter and son-in-law's place in Manton, MI. They had seen many turkeys in the area and invited us up to hunt. Tom was not feeling strong enough to do a lot of walking, but we thought we would try an "easy" hunt. We did a little scouting upon arrival. The next morning we tried some roadside calling. After a few stops and no response, we

took a two-track to the top of a hill of pine trees. We parked the truck at the top behind some trees, walked a few paces from the truck and Tom started calling. Immediately we heard gobbles! And, they sounded close. Tom quickly loaded his gun, set out a decoy and crouched behind a small pine tree. It was none too soon. The turkeys strutted up the hill right up to the decoy. Tom picked out the one with the biggest beard and BANG! What fun! What an easy hunt!

In spite of all the turkeys we see around our homes, turkey hunters know it's not that easy to bag a turkey when hunting. Sometimes that hunt can be very strenuous, calling and chasing a bird that keeps moving away or simply hiking thru the woods trying to get a response to your call. For those of us who don't have the stamina we once had, I share these stories to encourage you to "go for it." Happy hunting!



*Golf, gardening and grandchildren were primary interests of retirement for Louise.*

*Since that time, her interests have expanded to include walking, biking, pickleball and mahjonnig. Reading and travel are also high on her list. She and her husband both enjoy bow hunting for deer in the Upper Peninsula, hunting turkeys, and fishing in the Florida Keys.*

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## Keeping you moving

# The RIGHT Assistive Device



BY HOLLY  
LOOKABAUGH  
- DEUR

Our topic today really focuses on the important issue of these walking aids. Years ago, a person needed a physician prescription or there were hoops to jump over to obtain one. Now, you can order one for \$30 on Amazon and off you go! The risk in to all of these wonderful tools is that often the **WHOLE** picture is not considered before purchase, and one can actually increase their underlying problems or risk for falls by using the wrong device. This may not be the most popular topic for an article, but I want to help you know when and how to use these devices.

First, who should have ANY assistive device? Always remember these key points:

- When you begin using a device, you change your natural gait (how you walk).
  - For example, if you start using a walker, you are no longer rotating your upper body and swinging your arms as you walk. This is a part of our natural way of balancing ourselves, so if you lose that movement on a regular basis, you may increase your risk for falls. *Hot tip – you can always add a simple chair-based exercise program to make sure you keep these movements strong and fluid.*
  - People tend to take smaller, slower steps when they use an assistive device. Fewer muscles are used, and weakness in key muscles – like in our cabooses – can result. *Again, any changes can be supplemented with exercises, but a person may not be aware that they are moving differently.*
- Wrong fit: Sometimes people are using a device that is either too tall or too short. Both can result in back and neck strain or not putting the right amount of weight through the hands.
  - Good rule of thumb: When fitting a device, stand at full attention. The surface that your hand goes on (like a cane handle or walker grip) should be as tall as the wrist crease.
  - Another way to measure – holding on to the device as you would normally, look at the angle of the elbow. It should be bent to about 30 degrees.
- Wrong device: Sometimes when we realize that we do feel more secure or need a little help using a device, we choose the wrong place to start. If you are not using anything (except your own two feet!) and then you start using a 4-wheeled walker, you can become more dependent by shutting off your natural balance reactions.
  - In progression order of how much assistance they are, from least to most: Simple, straight cane → Cane with 4 legs; small base → Cane with 4 legs; wide base → Hemi walker (one sided walker with 4 long legs) → 4 wheeled walker (not good for high risk for falls; quite unstable) → 2 wheeled walker (wheels in front) → 4 legged walker, no wheels – most stable; slowest walking speed  
FYI – crutches and loftstrand/ forearm crutches are considered more assistance than a cane but not many people use them unless they have a weight bearing issue
  - So consider a cane first or consult a therapist – physical or occupational therapist, to guide you in what is best to preserve your posture and natural balance reactions
- Wrong Technique: Proper use is absolutely essential to preventing an unnecessary fall. Many people lean into the walker too far or walk too far behind, putting too much weight on their hands and wrists. Some forget to use the brakes for getting up from sitting or moving from standing to sitting.

■ The biggest problem I see as a therapist is the change in gait speed. Surprisingly, the **SLOWER** we walk, the more likely we are to fall. Therapists agree that Gait Speed (how fast you walk) is a critical component to safety and mobility. The assistive device shouldn't slow you down significantly; rather, it should help you feel safe enough to walk at a good speed. 1.2 meters a second is a perfect gait speed. Think of it as being fast enough to cross a road at a cross walk with the timing on!

• Impact on Balance Reactions: When we change how we move – like putting weight through hands and arms to help steady oneself or take weight off a painful, arthritic hip, we change all of the sensations associated with moving. We don't **THINK** about balance; our body just uses our eyes, our inner ear sensation and sensors in our body to tell us where our body is in space... and then adjusts without us thinking about it. When we **CHANGE** these sensations, we may not challenge or use our natural systems, and they may get sluggish or sleepy and not kick in when we need them to! We become more dependent on our eyes for balance as we age, so keeping those other systems alive and is super important. Ask a physical therapist about some simple balance exercises to help keep your senses sharp.

■ Here are two simple and safe balance strategies:

Standing sideways – holding on to a counter (important!)

1. Swing one leg forward and backward as far as you can, back and forth like a pendulum. Once you have a good rhythm going, close your eyes – keep swinging. Then stop your leg at the peak of forward movement and backward swing, too – and hold it there a second – keep your eyes closed!
2. Stand and hold on to the counter with one hand. Stand on one foot. If you can hold yourself for 10 seconds without tipping, add closing your eyes. If you are **REALLY** confident, let go of the counter (but stay super close in case you lose your balance) Do this with both legs. One will be easier – we all have a dominant side.

A few closing thoughts:

- Overuse of motorized carts: There is a fine line between staying functional – being able to shop on your own through long aisles, and wanting a ride because you are tired. Only you know what you need and what is best for you! Just remember that whatever you don't use – even from time to time – you will eventually lose. Try to do as much as you can on your own so you keep things firing as best as possible. There are so many considerations when you are choosing something to help keep you moving – safe, speedy, and functional. Whenever possible, consult with a professional like a physical therapist or occupational therapist, to help guide you. There are many different standardized tests and measures that can be used to fit you properly. If you do choose something on your own, be sure you read the directions or look up “how to” videos on line so you know all of the safety features up front.

Holly Lookabaugh-Deur is a licensed physical therapist and certified exercise expert on aging with 37 years of clinical experience. She owns and operates Generation Care in Muskegon, Grand Haven, and Grand Rapids, and welcomes questions and comments anytime! [hollyld@generationcare.org](mailto:hollyld@generationcare.org)

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# Keep Your Feet Pain Free

## Bunions, Hammertoes and Flat Feet



BY  
JAN  
SMOLEN, DPM

As we age, so do our feet. Deformities and abnormalities that become more pronounced can make your feet uncomfortable and painful.

Below are three common foot abnormalities and suggestions to keep your feet pain free.

- **Bunions:** Which are deformities/dislocation of 1st MPJ joint. (Big toe joint) This causes the big toe to move over or towards the little toes. Bunions are usually inherited and associated with flatfoot deformity. Women tend to have a higher rate developing of bunions from wearing high heeled and tight shoes. Bunions can pose problems if they become painful or if the shoe rubs on them and a blister or a sore appears. If a blister or a sore appears, clean the area with soapy water. Apply triple antibiotic and a band-aid. See a Podiatrist or your Health Care Provider.

What can you do if you have bunions?

1. Wear supportive shoes that are wide enough to give your foot room.
2. Use arch supports such as Power Steps or Spencos.
3. Have your shoes stretched since many shoes stores offer this service. A good way to stretch shoes at home is to pack as much newspaper as possible into the shoes and let them sit for 3-5 days.
4. If bunions are painful and affecting your daily life, see a Podiatrist

and surgery should be considered.

- **Hammertoes:** Which are deformities in which the toes curl. They are usually more pronounced between the ages of 50-70 years old. Shoes can rub on the toes or the toes can rub together and a corn can develop. A corn is an abnormal buildup of skin.

- Please do not apply a medicated corn remover pad to your corns or calluses. They have acid in them and can cause infections. I see 1-2 of these infections from medicated corn pads per year.

- DO soak your feet in Epsom salts in warm water for 20 min. Apply triple antibiotic and band-aid. If it doesn't resolve call a Podiatrist.

- DO get wider toe box shoes, such as a SAS PW minor.

- DO wiggle your toes to stretch them.

- **Flat Feet:** This is when your ankles roll in, and/or there is no arch. Flat-foot deformity is most commonly inherited, but can also be a result of a trauma or injury. To help with flat-foot deformity, wear high top shoes or hiking boots. Arch supports such as Power Steps, custom orthotics or Arizona Braces can be helpful. But surgery may be required if there is no relief.

*Jan Smolen DPM is board certified by The American Board of Podiatric Surgery and is a Diplomat of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. She works at Shoreline Foot and Ankle Associates in Muskegon. She enjoys running, hiking and kayaking with her husband Ron and watching their 3 children play sports.*



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This program is supported by the U.S. Administration on Aging, the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, and Senior Resources of West Michigan.



## Soul Food

### An Enchanted Time



BY  
GIL BOERSMA,  
M.DIV., B.C.C.

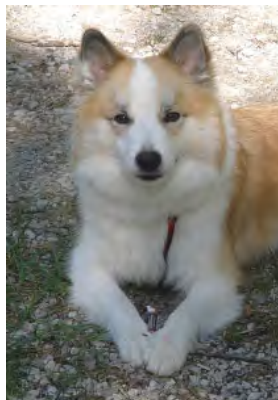
*"Never trust a dog to watch your food."*

*St. Patrick*

When I experienced the warm humor in the quote above, I knew I needed to know more about this man whom is remembered every Spring. Saint Patrick was a fifth-century Romano-British Christian mission-

ary and bishop in Ireland. He is one of the world's most popular saints. He was born in Roman Britain and when he was fourteen or so, he was captured by Irish pirates during a raid and taken to Ireland as a slave to herd and tend sheep. At the time, Ireland was a land of Druids and pagans but Patrick turned to God for his guidance and strength.

I read that St. Patrick's Day is considered an enchanted time - a day to begin transforming winter's dreams into summer's magic. As we look back on one of the



coldest and most snow-filled winters in recent years, what have you been praying will come into your life in the Spring? We all love the freedom to get out in the warm weather and sunlight, even when we need help to get there! Many of us long for the return of birds and flowers. As seniors we may also look forward to seeing more of our friends or grandchildren, as the weather permits, and as the schools offer "spring break."

Now, I know I am blessed to still be able to prepare for any kind of weather and walk my dog. In fact, I bought my dog to encourage me to get up and keep moving! God must have known what dog I needed, because I truly think He had something to do with placing my dog in my path. One clue is that I can look at him and "see" his desire to get outside. I chose a breed that loves all weather and is especially suited for winter. He is only a foot and a half tall at the shoulders and 35 pounds, plus he has a "double coat" like a husky. What's his name you say? His name is "Pastor." My inspiration came as I thought about the origin of his breed. Nordic sailors brought him to Iceland in the 9th century. From that time on, this breed became companions to the shepherds, living a pastoral existence. "Pastor" means to gather and feed. Plus, the dog searches for lost sheep. However, one can never trust this dog to watch your food.

Imagine God as a dog. After all, God spelled backwards is Dog. I have heard him called "the hound of heaven." Know this my friends, God loves you more than you can imagine. He chases you and wants to spend time with you. Don't ever think you are not worthy. Give God a chance and he will enrich your life and prepare you for eternity. Use the name that comforts you!

*Rev. Gil Boersma, MDiv., is a retired pastor and Board Certified Chaplain. He offers spiritual direction to seekers who wish to grow deeper in their faith. Call 231-557-5640 for consultation.*

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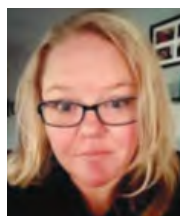
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BY  
DELICIA  
EKLUND

Hundreds of vintage photos are donated to The Muskegon County Genealogical Society (MCGS) with limited, if any, information. The first dapper gentleman looks great, but came with no information. The second two pictures are wonderful, and judging by the palm trees were not taken in Muskegon. They too had no information with them. We would love to locate someone from the families and get the pictures back to them. If you know them, please give me a call and let me know.

Senior Resources of West Michigan has partnered with MCGS to assist in identifying these photos. This is where you come in. Future editions of the Senior Perspectives will feature more photos of individuals, families and places from the Muskegon and surrounding areas. We try to find families who have links to Muskegon.

I will give you any information that I received while gathering the photos from MCGS. If you can help to identify any of these individuals or know the family, please contact, or have them contact: MCGS Pictures, C/O HPL-Torrent House, Local History & Genealogy Dept. 315 W. Webster Ave Muskegon, MI 49440. Email us 1972mcgs@gmail.com

*Delicia is an Options Counselor with Senior Resources. She grew up in Norton Shores and loves everything history! She spends much time researching her own family, as well as local history. She loves spending time with her husband Andy and son Alan. You can contact her at [deklund@seniorresourceswmi.org](mailto:deklund@seniorresourceswmi.org) or 231-683-2630.*

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# A Picture is Worth a Thousand ~~Words~~

# Memories!



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**Warning: The people having fun in these photos are NOT actors. They are actual residents and employees of Oceana Medical Care Facility!**

## Answers for Word Search , Crossword Puzzle and Suduko on Pages 24 & 25

S	P	A	T		H	I	E	S		P	A	R	A		
E	L	S	E		O	S	S	O		I	B	I	S		
P	A	P	A	D	O	N	T	P	R	E	A	C	H		
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A	R	E		E	E	L		A	U	P	A	I	R	S	
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A	S	P	E	R	S	E		E	Y	E		P	I	S	
S	C	A	N	T			A	L	E		S	H	E	S	
P	O	P	T	H	E	Q	U	E	S	T	I	O	N		
E	P	E	E		B	U	N	T		W	A	N	T		
N	E	R	D		B	A	T	E		A	M	E	S		

1	6	8	7	2	9	4	3	5
3	2	7	5	4	1	8	6	9
9	4	5	8	6	3	7	1	2
2	1	3	6	9	7	5	8	4
4	8	9	3	5	2	6	7	1
7	5	6	4	1	8	2	9	3
8	3	2	9	7	5	1	4	6
5	7	4	1	3	6	9	2	8
6	9	1	2	8	4	3	5	7

### Boggle Answers:

HORSE SLOTH HYENA LEMUR  
MOOSE PANDA OTTER WHALE

### Jumble Answers:

PRIOR GUEST EXOTIC MATTER

### Answer:

The puppy that shredded the morning newspaper was a - "TEAR-IER"



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